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Revised report from Elected Officials Compensation Advisory Board

1 message

'Todd Thompson' via City Clerk <cclerk@northamptonma.gov>

Fri, Oct 31, 2014 at 9:58 AM

Reply-To: Todd Thompson <tkthompson@yahoo.com>

To: Councilor William Dwight <wdwight@northamptonma.gov>

Cc: "Mayor of Northampton Mass." <mayor@northamptonma.gov>, "cclerk@northamptonma.gov" <cclerk@northamptonma.gov>

Councilor Dwight,

After submitting our original report to the Council on Monday, Councilors Adams identified an error in a reference we made to the Charter and Councilor Carney drew attention to a point of confusion regarding our recommendation to discontinue certain retirement benefits.

We felt a correction and clarification were in order and subsequently have made the following revisions to the attached report:

Under **Mayor** (p.4)

Change: "Under the Charter, the mayor is prohibited from outside employment or remuneration."

To: "The position of mayor is a full time position with rigorous work demands that effectively preclude outside employment."

Under **Part-Time Elected Officials** (p.7), insert the following:

Retirement Benefits

Elected officials are granted special status under Commonwealth law that allows those earning \$5,000 or more to participate in the municipal retirement system. In contrast, regular municipal employees are required to work 20 hours/week to gain eligibility.

Presently, eligibility only extends to city councilors based on their \$5,000 stipend, and not to school committee members or trustees. Were the recommended stipend increases to be implemented, **all** part-time elected officials would become eligible to participate in the City's retirement system.

While it does not currently fall within the City's authority to revise pension eligibility rules, the Board felt, as a matter of principle, that part-time elected officials should not be granted retirement benefits that are unavailable to other part-time City employees. In addition, concerns were raised about the lack of transparency and uncertainty regarding the future cost to the City of this liability given the current underfunded status of the City retirement system.

Recommendation

The recommendation of the Board is to discontinue the current practice should changes be made to the statutes governing pension law or the supplemental rules governing eligibility.

We look forward to presenting our report to the Council next Thursday.

Todd Thompson, Chair

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